2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

177 nese (from at least the sixth century) and after 1498 the Portuguese, followed by the English, Dutch, and French (Logan, 1951, I: 251–254, 258, 294–399).

133 The coast falls roughly into three natural divisions: the coastal strip, the midlands, and the highlands rising into the Ghats (cf. Buchanan, [245] 1807: 565–566). The coastal strip is flat and sandy. Its chief product [243] is coconuts, with some rice and bananas. In the southern half it is broken by salt-water lagoons which for over a hundred miles form a continuous navigable chain parallel to the sea. Most of the chief 361 towns are situated on the coast, divided by chains of little fishing vil- [487] lages. Many of the coast towns are ancient, and most of them lie at the mouths of navigable rivers which flow westward from the Ghats. [439] From time immemorial raw materials, chiefly pepper, were brought by boat from the inland hillsides for shipment from these ports.

133 The midlands comprise low hills and fertile valleys. Broad strips of alluvial rice lands lie in the valleys, thinning out as the land rises 245 into the foothills of the Ghats. On the hill slopes are gardens of co- conut palms, bananas, pepper, ginger, and many fruit trees such as [439] jack and mango. It was probably wild pepper which was exported in Roman times, but pepper and other spices have been deliberately [177] cultivated at least since 1290 (Ricci, 1931: 328). Cashew nuts, introduced by the Portuguese, formed an additional export crop. Small 361 merchant settlements, market-centers, and the military fortifications of 443 petty chiefs existed at strategic points on river banks. Some of these centers grew into bazaar towns in the nineteenth century. But the mass of the population traditionally lived, as today, in scattered village communities on garden land surrounding or surrounded by fields 243 of wet rice, the main subsistence crop. Wet-rice cultivation depended 231 on plough agriculture with teams of oxen or water buffalo. Goats and chickens were the other significant domestic animals.

361 The highlands rising into the Ghats were covered mainly by de- [133] ciduous forests. The foothills, interspersed with occasional rice flats, were sparsely populated by people of the same cultural groups as [241] those in the plains. They eked out their wet-rice cultivation with gar- [224] den crops of fruits, spices, and vegetables, with shifting hoe cultivation of dry grains on hillsides, and with forest hunting of elephant, deer, and pig. Higher in the mountains lived primitive tribes of hunters and shifting cultivators, having only occasional contacts with the kingdoms of the plains.

132 Throughout most of the area Kerala's rainfall varies between 75 and 170 inches, being heaviest in the north where the mountains are

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll

Transport

5.46 The entire coastline of Kerala is well served by the railways. From Trivandrum to Kayankulam and from Tirur to Manjeswar, a total distance of 220 miles, the tracks are only two to three miles from the sea coast. In addition, there is a motorable road running almost all along the entire coastline. Head loads, bicycles, motor lorries, all these modes are employed for the transportation of fish to the markets depending on the distance of the landing sites from the consuming centres.

5.47 The State Fisheries Department operates four insulated vans. In addition, the Department operates two insulated carrier boats, one from Cochin and the other from Azhikode. These boats transport iced-fish through the inland waters to the interior places. For the marketing of fish in the interior areas, the Indo-Norwegian Project operates eight refrigerated vans.

5.48 It is estimated that the State will require about 60 road vehicles and 20 carrier vessels during the next 10 years. The capital expenditure on these is expected to be about Rs. 40 lakhs, of which Rs. 15 lakhs would be required during the Third Plan. The trucks and carrier vessels should, as far as possible, be owned and operated by Fishermen's Cooperative Societies. Expansion of insulated wagon facilities on the railways will be equally necessary. Insulated wagons should be provided on routes connecting the major production centres with the consumption centres.

Marketing

5.49 The marketing of fish in Kerala is not well organized. At present it is controlled by a few moneylenders and fish merchants. The fishermen are very poor and have generally to depend on borrowings during the off season. A departmental survey reveals that in 1958 the fishermen in Kerala had total assets of only about Rs. 30 lakhs against a total debt of Rs. 135 lakhs. Only a small percentage of the fishermen in Kerala own the boats and nets they use. Most of them work as employees under few boat-owner fishermen. In the pay-off period the boat-owner advances small amounts to the fishermen for their day-to-day needs. The catch is auctioned at the landing centres. The bidders include the fish curers, the retailers and lorry owners, who generally supply fish to the retailers.

5.50 Fish prices fluctuate considerably even in the course of the day. Fish is never weighed in the market. They are measured by standards such as heap, basket, and number, and these vary from market to market. The important wholesale fish markets in the State are located at Trivandrum, Kottayam, Tonur, Trichur, Kozhikode, Alwaye, Changanacherry and Athirumpuzha.

5.51 Changanacherry, Athirumpuzha and Vaniyankulam are the most important markets for cured and salted fish. In the coastal areas the consumption of dried fish is confined mostly to the off-season when fishing totally stops. In the interior of the State, owing to lack of transport facilities, cured fish is sold for the major part of the year. The State has a number of retail fish markets, every town or a group of villages having at least one.

5.52 Fish marketing in Kerala requires a great deal of improvement, both

11: India G-4,5 (1960-1961) 1962 AW11 Kerala AW11

433 organizational and physical. Most of the fish markets lack such facilities as adequate
442 supply of water, drainage, proper flooring, wire screen, etc. Clean and hygienic con-
443 ditions for the sale of fish should be created in all the consumption centres. A number of retail and wholesale fish markets should be built at all the major consumption centres. Twenty of these markets may be a good target for the next decade. Provision of fish storage facilities, by way of small refrigerated cabinets is also necessary in retail marketing. The capital cost for building these new markets and providing the storage cabinets would be about Rs. 20 lakhs of which Rs. 8 lakhs may be under the Third Plan. In order to ensure reasonable return to the fishermen it is imperative that cooperative marketing of fish should be expanded as much as possible.

Servicing of Marine Engines

433 5.53 The programme envisaged for mechanized fishing will call for adequate
504 servicing and overhauling facilities. The Integrated Fisheries Development Centres, where most of the mechanized boats will be concentrated, should have properly equipped servicing stations. At least three such stations may be established by the end of the Third Plan, and another five by the end of the Fourth Plan. Together, the capital cost of these eight service stations will be about Rs. 4 lakhs.

Cooperatives

226 5.54 Fishermen's cooperatives in Kerala are not well developed. Most of the
474 societies are credit societies. Only three cooperative societies are engaged in the manufacture of nets and two in the marketing of fish. Recently some Producer Cooperative Societies have been organized under the auspices of the Fisheries Department. Nets, boats, etc., are owned by these societies and the members carry on fishing on a cooperative basis.

433 5.55 Simultaneously with the development of fisheries in the next decade, the
226 fisheries cooperative should also be strengthened. The aim should be to bring the
474 majority of the fishermen within the cooperative fold. The Integrated Fisheries Development Centres should all be organized on a cooperative basis, covering all aspects of the industry.

Staff

433 5.56 The Fisheries Directorate appears to be adequately staffed for the work it has
228 to deal with at present. However, the implementation of the expanded programme
647 suggested in this report will not only entail a considerable strengthening of the existing
655 staff, but also require certain new categories of technical personnel. It will be especially necessary to provide an adequate staff to man the mechanized boats and the technical services necessary to operate the boats. A number of training centres should be opened to train the fishermen in the art of mechanized fishing. In addition, each of the Integrated Fisheries Centres should have a trained Marketing Assistant to assist the fishermen and their Cooperatives in organizing the marketing of their catches. It

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

west, and sold there. The profit of the bargain is four annas. Twelve families subsist on this trade.

Buttermilk, ghee and butter are made and sold by some families. But this is not a steady trade. It is dependent on cows giving birth.

Village trade.—The volume and the extent of village trade is limited; the wants are few and easily satisfied. Paddy seed for cultivation is not purchased but borrowed from the landlord at an interest of sixty per cent. The amount borrowed with the interest thereon is annually given back to the landlord and again borrowed at the sowing season. The borrower is bound to return paddy fit for seeding.

Other commodities useful for agriculture, such as ropes, vessels used for lifting water, etc., are purchased from the little town of Kunnankulam, eight miles off and belonging to the Native State of Cochin. There is a big bazaar at Kunnankulam where almost all necessaries and luxuries are sold. But the usual market for the village trade is that held on every Thursday at Chalisseri, a large village three miles to the west of Kothachira. People take areca, paddy and other vegetables to this market, get these sold there and with the money thus obtained purchase necessaries; sometimes articles are directly exchanged for paddy. The chief necessaries usually purchased are salt, fish, oil, kerosene, chillis, onions, and cloth to wear. Men and women wear simply one *mundu* around the waist. Hence little clothing is required.

Chalisseri is in a way an important place. Much trade in areca is carried on here. The agents of the areca traders of Chalisseri come to each family and purchase directly the quantities each has to sell. The quantity conveyed to market by the ryot himself is not very great. The selling price of areca varies from three to five rupees per tulam (= 25 lb.) according to time and circumstances. The arecanut traders of Chalisseri are absolute masters of this business and often impose their own terms upon the cultivator. After being cut and dried areca is exported by the former into the districts of the east. The best areca grower has sold nuts worth Rs. 400 a year.

The road that runs from the Pattambai railway station to Chowghat passes through Chalisseri. This is the nearest road to Kothachira people. It winds near Kutnad and thus runs parallel to the northern and western boundaries of Kothachira at a distance of two miles from each. A by-road cut from the western arm of the main road to the house of one of the jenmis at his own expense, has long been out of use and is not adapted for public purposes.

The idea of co-operation is unknown. A public road opened along the private footpath that runs between Karuvathur, a village six miles to the east of Kothachira, and Chalisseri, would be of immense use to the public of these parts. Much traffic is carried on along this footpath between these places specially on market days. It would run across Peringode and along the boundary between Mathur and Kothachira and thus benefit all these desams.

Economic condition of village.—The economic condition of this desam is rather discouraging. The people are deep in debt, are overworked and underfed and ground down by a double tyranny, the tyranny of the landlord who is also the money-lender, and the tyranny of deep-rooted custom in all their lives and walks.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

Sale of village produce.—Paddy, coconuts, bananas, plantains, arecanuts, pepper, vegetables, medicinal plants and roots are sent to market in larger or smaller quantities. 438

Paddy is not taken to the market, but traders come to the houses or the village shop to buy. Pepper is bought by Muhammadan traders early in the season, while not yet ripe, and afterwards sold at a great profit, often 100 or 200 per cent. All the other articles are taken by the producers to the market, chiefly to the Vaniamkulam weekly fair and sold at greater or smaller profit. A part of the produce is consumed in the village.

The trunk road from Palghat to Ponnani passes through the middle of the village. It leads to the two railway stations of Shoranur (the junction for the South Indian Railway and the Cochin Railway) and Pattambi, which are almost equidistant. The road also passes through Vaniamkulam, 6 miles east of the village, where there is the most important fair in Malabar. The town of Ottappālam (where there is a High School and a Munsif's Court) which is a small commercial centre, also lies on the road, some nine miles east of the village. Palghat is thirty miles east. Ponnāni, 22 miles distant, is a small coast town and a commercial centre and it is the western terminus of the road, which is also connected with Angadipuram, the taluk headquarters. The stream which passes through the village is full during the rains and is accessible to boats from the Ponnāni river. Some trade is thus carried on. Carts are the usual vehicles of transport. There are four in the village itself. 491 498

Village trade and consumption.—There is only one important shop in the village and it is therefore possible to get some idea of the amount of commodities bought by villagers from the accounts of the shop. The shop was started in 1892 and was at that time the only one in those parts. Since then a few petty shops have been started, but the business done by them is not very considerable. They deal mostly in those common articles of every-day consumption which are purchased in small quantities from day to day by the poorer classes. On the other hand the one important shop mentioned supplies the needs not only of the inhabitants of this village but of other villages as well. Some allowance must be made on this score when considering the consumption of commodities by this village, so that the total sales of the village shop may not be taken as representing the purchases of the inhabitants of this place. 443 438

The total sales of the shop amount in value to about Rs. 12,000 a year. The chief items are—

	Rs.
Paddy	2,500
Salt	2,000
Coconut-oil	1,500
Iron bolts, bars, screws and other metallic articles	1,000
Kerosene oil	750
Tobacco	750
Gingelly oil	500
Dhall, grains, pulses, etc.	1,500
Betel leaves and nuts	500
Castor oil	250
Sugar	200

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India
Kerala AW11

443 438 [465] Of these paddy is mostly bought by outsiders and non-agricultural labourers, such as carpenters or blacksmiths. Most labourers indeed get their wages in paddy. Metallic articles are mostly bought by blacksmiths, both in this village (to a very small extent) and by outsiders. So, too, in regard to coconut oil, gingelly oil, tobacco, sugar and all other articles, large quantities are purchased by persons coming from other villages, where there are no shops. Probably about 50 per cent of the total sales are to outsiders.

As regards the quantities of these articles consumed, the shopkeeper says that there is no difference between what is sold now and what was sold 25 years ago when the shop was started. Only the prices have risen. One or two new articles of consumption have however been introduced, e.g., coffee, the sale of which is increasing. Iron and other metallic articles began to be sold some 15 years ago and the sales are increasing, though very little is consumed in the village. Besides the articles mentioned the shop deals in sundry small articles of consumption in the village, such as medicinal products, garlic and onions (consumed by the 438 Cherumas and the lower castes), chillis, spices and the like. An important commercial product is pepper. The village produces about Rs. 2,000 worth of it and the shop buys about Rs. 1,000 worth from other villages. Very little of this is sold in the village. It is sent to the towns and commercial centres. The trade is very profitable and may be extended.

The commodities sold in the village are brought from the nearest towns or trading centres, like Palghat, Calicut, Trichur and Ponnāni. The usual means of transportation are bullock carts. It does not pay to bring small quantities by railway and there is also the risk of delay and damage. The villagers also sometimes buy their clothing and other articles in towns or at the Vaniamkulam fair. About a thousand rupees worth of vegetable and garden produce is also taken to the fair in a year for sale, with the proceeds of which the villagers buy cattle and implements or commodities for consumption. The local prices of commodities are 10 per cent higher than prices in towns, about 4 per cent representing cost of carriage and the remainder interest and profit. After deducting interest on capital invested at 9 per cent, the owner of the shop makes a fair sum as wages of superintendence and profits—about Rs. 400 per annum, excluding the profits from the pepper trade which are at least as much again as this. The shop also sells paper and other articles of stationery for the use of villagers at fair prices.

435 As regards the rise in retail prices in recent years, the village accounts show a general rise in prices of nearly 100 per cent—salt alone having fallen in price. The rise is most marked in foodstuffs and other articles of immediate consumption, and in metallic articles. Betel leaves have not risen much in price. Paddy, which used to sell at 2½ to 3 paras per rupee 25 years ago, now sells at 1·2 to 1·8 or 2 paras. Oils have generally risen at least 100 per cent in 25 years. So also sugar, tobacco and the like.

432 If one compares the total value of purchases by different classes, one will find that the many purchases of the few well-to-do persons and the few small purchases from day to day of the great majority of poor persons roughly equal one another. The Cherumas and